

January 2000

MCKENZIE RIVER FOCUS WATERSHED COORDINATION

Annual Report 2000



DOE/BP-00004117-1



This report was funded by the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), U.S. Department of Energy, as part of BPA's program to protect, mitigate, and enhance fish and wildlife affected by the development and operation of hydroelectric facilities on the Columbia River and its tributaries. The views of this report are the author's and do not necessarily represent the views of BPA.

This document should be cited as follows:

<i>Thrailkil, Jim - McKenzie Watershed Council, McKenzie River Focus Watershed Coordination Year End Report - Fiscal Year 2000, Report to Bonneville Power Administration, Contract No. 00004117, Project No. 199607000, 12 electronic pages (BPA Report DOE/BP-00004117-1)</i>

This report and other BPA Fish and Wildlife Publications are available on the Internet at:

<http://www.efw.bpa.gov/cgi-bin/efw/FW/publications.cgi>

For other information on electronic documents or other printed media, contact or write to:

Bonneville Power Administration
Environment, Fish and Wildlife Division
P.O. Box 3621
905 N.E. 11th Avenue
Portland, OR 97208-3621

Please include title, author, and DOE/BP number in the request.

*McKenzie River Focus
Watershed Coordination*

Year-End Report

To The Bonneville Power Administration

Fiscal Year 2000

Project No. 199607000



“..the Council’s mission is to foster better stewardship of the McKenzie Watershed resources through partnerships and collaboration...”

Abstract

This report summarizes accomplishments of the McKenzie River Focus Watershed Council (MWC) in the areas of coordination and administration during Fiscal Year 2000. Coordination and administration consist of prioritization and planning for projects; project management and implementation; procurement of funding for long-term support of the Council; and watershed education/outreach program for residents and local schools.

Key accomplishments in the area of project planning include coordinating: monthly Council and executive committee meetings; staffing the Upper Willamette Spring Chinook Working Group; staffing the water quality technical committee; and guiding education and stewardship projects.

Key accomplishments in the area of project management include the completion of the McKenzie-Willamette Confluence Assessment; securing funds for project planning in the confluence area; near completion of the BPA funded McKenzie sub-basin assessment; development of a framework for a McKenzie Watershed Conservation Strategy; an evaluation of Council's monitoring programs - ambient water quality, storm-event water quality, Tier III water quality, and macroinvertebrate monitoring.

The Council, in cooperation with the McKenzie River Cooperative, completed habitat enhancements in the Gate Creek and Deer Creek sub-watersheds. This partnership recently submitted Bring Back the Natives grant for initiation of projects in other McKenzie tributaries. The Council will also be working with a local business to develop a river-side riparian enhancement and native landscaping project on the lodge grounds. This will serve as a demonstration project for blending fish and wildlife habitat concerns with maintaining grounds for business opportunities.

Accomplishments in the area of procurement of funding included developing the FY2000 Scope of Work and budget for approval by the Council and BPA; providing quarterly budget and work program progress reports to the Council; and securing additional funding from Council partner organizations and foundations. Highlights in the area of watershed education/outreach include the MWC's lead role in convening the Watershed Education Network for teachers as part of its educational mission; production of newsletters and brochures; and coordination of media coverage of watershed-related issues.

MWC completed all tasks outlined in the FY2000 Scope of Work with the following staff: Watershed Coordinator (1.0 FTE), Project Coordinator (.25 FTE), and Education Coordinator (0.5 FTE). Coordination of these activities by MWC improves resource

stewardship and protects fish and wildlife habitat through increased collaboration among Federal, state, and local government agencies, and landowners within the watershed. Increasing awareness and expanding knowledge affects behavior positively and promotes attitudes that encourage watershed stewardship. During Fiscal Year 2001, MWC intends to focus on an Implementation Strategy based on the McKenzie sub-basin assessment results; implementation of projects recommended from the McKenzie-Willamette confluence assessment; and increasing its presence at the local level through contact with watershed residents and groups.

Summary of Coordination Activities

Project Prioritization and Planning

Funding from the Bonneville Power Administration and McKenzie Watershed Council Partner organizations allowed for continued administration of the McKenzie Focus Watershed Council. As the Council has continued to grow, administrative duties have increased, and the staff has made every effort to maintain an efficient structure. This was partially aided by having a very basic need met. An office for the Council was established through a cooperative partnership with Lane County Parks. Located along the McKenzie River near the town of Coburg, OR, the office is regularly utilized by Council Staff; many of the Council's subcommittees meet in the conference room provided in the facility.



The Council and its Executive Committee continued to regularly meet, and eleven monthly meetings were planned, staffed, and recorded. Work plans were developed and monitored at these meetings, and important information sharing and partnership-building continued to be facilitated. Guest speakers provided updates on the Cougar Reservoir Temperature Control project, ramifications of the 4d rule, EWEB's Water Quality Protection Plan, and other important issues within the watershed.

Facilitating information sharing has become a key component of the MWC's role. Council Staff responded to a variety of inquiries, including requests from the local and state officials, individual property owners questions about regulations, and residents with general concerns about the watershed. The MWC has also played a significant role in coordination with other Willamette Basin Councils. This alliance has included conversations of 501c3 issues, Lane County funding via timber receipt dollars, and support and planning for the Ridgetop-To-Ridgetop Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board Conference.

Important relationships with the East Lane Soil and Water Conservation District have continued to be fostered through the development of a Memorandum of Understanding. This document was precedent setting, and is being used as a model throughout the state.

The MWC also continued its support of the Mohawk Watershed Partnership, which has been flourishing under the leadership of a new coordinator. The MWC provided funding to enable this group to continue its communication and restoration work in this

tributary to the McKenzie River.

A growing partnership with the McKenzie River Trust will pay big dividends as the Council's moves into prioritizing protection projects in the watershed. The MWC provided a letter of support for MRT to receive \$500,000 from EWEB for acquisitions. They are actively seeking matching funds. The MWC also serves on a committee looking at properties to obtain or develop conservation agreements with that will be of value to the long-term biological condition of the watershed.

Other partnerships have included the Cities of Eugene and Springfield, and Lane County. The MWC provided a letter of support to the fledgling Metropolitan Endangered Species Act Coordination Team. The Council supports their efforts by providing technical expertise, advice and serving on the MECT.

This type of relationship has given the MWC standing when bringing forth water quality issues with municipalities. The MWC water quality monitoring of Cedar Creek, for example, uncovered E. coli concerns. The Council has been able to encourage City of Springfield officials to be more pro-active in their storm water management because of the respect and relationship that has been built.

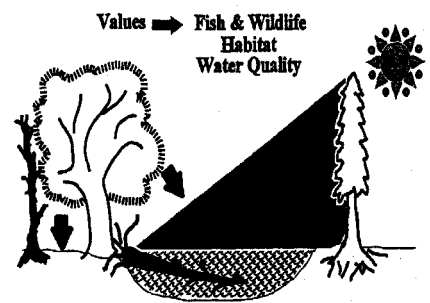
MWC has also spent a considerable amount of time working at larger scales. By serving on the board of the Willamette Basin Initiative (WRI), MWC is responsible for representing the valley's watershed councils. Staff also serves on the American Heritage River steering committee which represents watershed councils on the Willamette Province Advisory Committee formed under the Northwest Forest Plan.

MWC again chaired the Spring Chinook Working Group, which made impressive progress on several important projects (described in Project Management and Implementation). MWC maintained its Water Quality Monitoring Subcommittee, which spent the year evaluating the storm-event, macro-invertebrate and ambient monitoring programs for their efficacy.

Project Management and Implementation

Early in FY2000, MWC held a partner retreat to develop a work plan for year. Based on this plan, individual work plans were created for the Watershed Coordinator, Projects Manager and Education Manager. The Council made significant progress on the overall plan, which outlines tasks associated with each of the Council's four action plans (Fish and Wildlife, Water Quality, Recreation, and Human Habitat). This progress is described below.

The Upper Willamette Spring Chinook Working Group, an ad-hoc advisory group to watershed councils in the Upper Willamette Basin, completed a technical review of Lane County's Riparian Ordinance. Council Staff chaired the Working Group. The resulting white paper outlined a scientific basis for several recommended changes. The paper is being used by Lane County planners to reshape the ordinance for compliance with the Endangered Species Act.



A Sub-Basin Technical Committee guided the development of the BPA funded sub-basin assessment of fish and wildlife habitat in the McKenzie. This report is assessing the past, current, and potential future condition of fish and wildlife habitat in the McKenzie watershed. It is identifying critical areas of concern for potential future restoration activities. Please see the companion document describing the progress of this effort.

Completion of the assessment will provide important biological context to conduct watershed conservation.

The Council's Confluence Steering Committee guided the completion of an assessment of fish and wildlife habitat in the McKenzie-Willamette Confluence area (OWEB funded). This watery junction is the source of aggregate for four private operations, and is of critical importance to spring chinook recovery because of its historic role of providing rearing habitat. The overall purpose for evaluating fish and wildlife in the confluence area is to develop an understanding of the biological community and to formulate strategies for protecting/improving biological conditions – balanced with the extractive activities of the aggregate companies. Products of the assessment include:

- ◆ An Executive Summary outlining the major findings on fish, wildlife, and water quality in the confluence area; interactions between flood protection and fish/wildlife habitat; and restoration principles aimed at conditions in the confluence area.
- ◆ An easy-to-operate computer product that anyone could use to view maps and

data summaries for historic, current, and restored conditions.

- ◆ Several ArcInfo data layers containing biological information.
- ◆ A detailed report presenting information on fish, wildlife, and water quality.
- ◆ An educational slide show.



Phase II of the Confluence Project is beginning with another, recently awarded OWEB grant. This phase will capitalize on the assessment results; integrating the biological and hydraulic studies to plan and prioritize projects in the confluence

area. It is anticipated that major restoration projects will be implemented in the coming year.



MWC expanded its work with the McKenzie River Salmon and Trout Habitat Consortium, which comprises agencies and private interests conducting habitat restoration projects throughout the McKenzie Watershed. The Gate Creek and Deer Creek stewardship projects were completed, and several were visited on field trips by the

Ridgetop-To-Ridgetop-Conference attendees, congressional delegation, and international resource practitioners. The Consortium has developed additional enhancement projects to implement and is attempting to secure funds.

The MWC, in partnership with the USFS, BLM, Lane County Parks, ODFW, and McKenzie River Guides installed a series of watershed educational kiosks at boat landings on the McKenzie. The kiosks are designed to educate the public by providing information on cultural and natural history, and river etiquette and safety.

The Council prioritized time to evaluate the efficacy of its water quality monitoring program. Data from the Tier I ambient monitoring (conducted jointly with DEQ and Eugene Water and Electric Board), Tier II storm event monitoring, and the macro-invertebrate monitoring programs were analyzed by a Technical Review Committee. Recommendations were made to the Council regarding whether the results obtained were meeting stated monitoring objectives. A few minor adjustments will be made in FY2001 to implement recommendations provided by the technical committee.

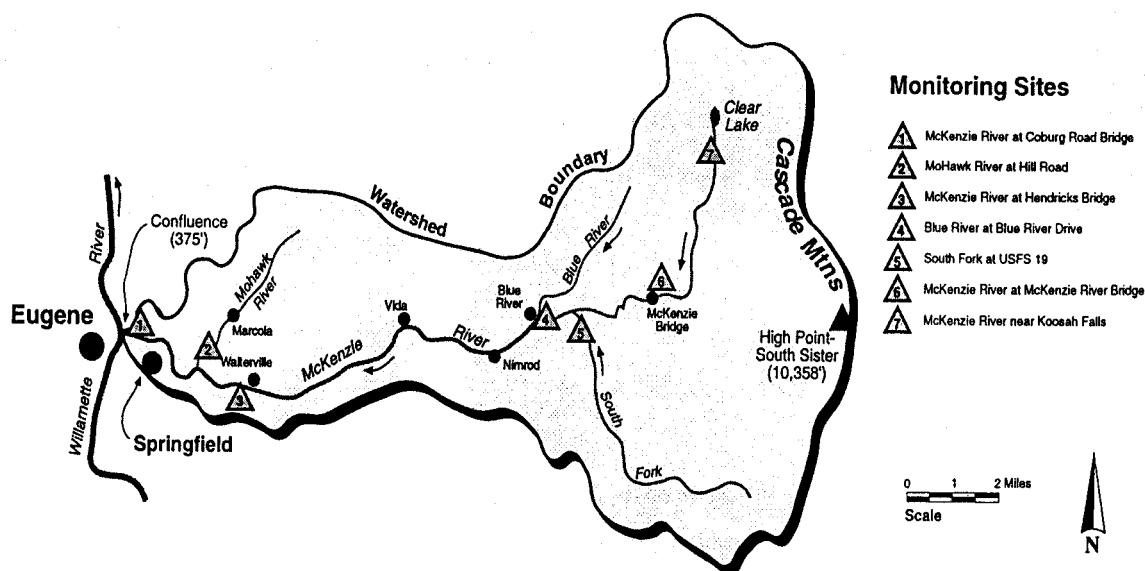


Figure is of the McKenzie Watershed and location of ambient water quality monitoring locations.

To keep it all fiscally afloat, the Staff coordinated and authored grant proposals, contracts, fiscal agreements, and Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) to support the above projects, successfully bringing funds in from all these avenues to fund projects. A strong commitment of both fiscal and technical support continues to occur from: USFS, BLM, ACE, EWEB, SUB, Weyerhaeuser, and others. To keep data in order, MWC maintained its cooperative relationship with the University of Oregon's Infographics Lab to house GIS databases. In addition, the Council's website was updated, a McKenzie Watershed Atlas has been developed, and an Environmental Studies class at the UofO created a power-point presentation about the McKenzie Watershed and Council to be used by Council Partners for outreach.

Watershed Education and Outreach

MWC was actively involved in student education and adult watershed stewardship projects. The Education Manager continued to shepherd the Teacher Watershed Education Network, which focuses on helping teachers obtain assistance on watershed issues. The network also increases regional opportunities for students in watershed education. Through this network, two teacher workshops were conducted this year on

macro-invertebrate and water quality monitoring.

Council Staff worked both in the classroom and in the field with students, teaching topics such as macro-invertebrates and water quality. The Education Manager also worked very closely with the Springfield School District's WELL and WET programs. Involvement included teacher training, development of watershed curriculum for elementary students, and assisting teachers in the field. Thurston High School juniors and seniors collaborated with MWC on water quality monitoring in Cedar Creek. The students tested samples from the ISCO weekly and reported the data to the Council.



MWC staff participated in local watershed events, such as the Leaburg Festival and Walterville Fair. These provided the opportunity to interact with watershed residents individually, share information about MWC's activities, and identify common interests that might engage residents. MWC partners and staff made a variety of presentations as part of its outreach program, to such groups as Groundwater Guardians and the Vida Neighborhood Watch. MWC also participated in several large watershed education events: Forest Field Day, Salmon Watch, "A Tale of Two Rivers," the Student Achievement Fair, and Outdoor School.



Additional watershed stewardship projects were investigated with local landowners, including the development of a riparian and native landscape demonstration project at Eagle Rock Lodge. Residents were encouraged to get involved in their watershed through projects such as the "Macro-invertebrate Day." Eighteen volunteers showed up in the rain for this 3rd annual event that teaches the public about macro-invertebrates and their monitoring. University of Oregon students showed their support of the watershed, as the MWC coordinated with SOLV (Stop Oregon Litter and Vandalism) to have the University adopt a stretch of the McKenzie River.

The Council produced several outreach materials during the 2000 fiscal year. Two issues of McKenzie Meanderings, the Council's newsletter, were distributed to over 5,000 watershed residents. A packet of educational materials on pond turtles, riparian habitat, and bull trout was distributed to all watershed residents that reside near streams. The Council continued to distribute its "Caring for Streamside Areas in the McKenzie Watershed: A Landowner's Guide" through local planning departments and

Realtors. And, staff maintained the MWC web site, which describes Council projects and activities and includes copies of planning and outreach materials. Additional resource materials are now available in the Council's resource library, established at the Council's office.

The Council continues to find ways to make its name a household word, including advertising in the local phone books. To increase knowledge on the wonderful resources of the McKenzie watershed, the Council is helping with the production of a book called Riverwater. This volume will share the cultural and natural history of the McKenzie watershed. MWC is helping to arrange interviews with key residents; is writing a chapter in the book about the Watershed Council; and is helping to sponsor grant agreements.

Coordination for the Future

During Fiscal Year 2001, the McKenzie Focus Watershed Council will focus its efforts on extracting information from the completed assessments to prioritize, plan, and seek funds for restoration projects. This will be accomplished through a planning effort to develop a comprehensive watershed conservation strategy. This will be an outcome driven strategy, that includes both short and long-term actions. The strategy will be geographically explicit and include project descriptions and partnerships. Concurrently, the Council will aggressively be pursuing restoration funds to implement a variety of projects than have been already identified as priorities to promote recovery of spring chinook salmon and water quality.

The Council is also looking to augment Staff with skills in the public outreach arena. The Council recognizes that a key component to project implementation is to first raise public awareness to the present conditions. The sub-basin assessment results provide a valuable outreach tool in this arena; it provides a context for action. From this, the need for why and what can be done to maintain and enhance watershed conditions can be articulated, in a way to spur action. The ability to do this type of outreach takes special skills.

The MWC efforts, including watershed assessment, restoration, and education, furthers the goals outlined in the Northwest Power Planning Council's Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program.